

‘WHOOSH! AND YOU’RE OUT IN FRONT/ THERE’S ENGLISH IN YOUR FUTURE’; A STUDY ON A EURO INFESTED CORPORATE WORLD

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ABSTRACT

English as a language entered our lives with the advent of colonisation and it has established itself as Lingua Franca. Though we started familiarising with the language for our daily existence, it has become a representative of being elitist and respectable. Gone are those days, where we find a few proficient with this tongue. Now that, English has become synonymous with the word success, people run after short term and long term courses to be proficient in the same. This growing trend has infected the minds of the layman, where he is ready to sacrifice his ease of speaking his mother tongue. It's been decades that the Europeans' have left India, but the fact still remains that we have not allowed them to leave from our minds. This undue affinity, which we shed on this foreign language, is really abominable. The paper studies how the corporate world embarks on promoting the language over other hybrid discourses.

KEYWORDS: *Linguicism, Linguistic Imperialism & Hybrid Discourse*

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INTRODUCTION

We live in a part of the world, where, man is judged by the language he speaks rather than the company he keeps. The impact of colonization is so massive that our lineage to the erstwhile euro centric culture is so evident. The mushrooming of English medium schools makes it evident how English is taken as an elite mode of communication. It alludes to the fact that our minds have been colonized by this land, where sun never sets. This is more or less the same in the job sector. The boom of IT revolution and globalization of business have brought technical communication to the forefront. Communication now has ceased to exist as a mode to convey a message it carries a greater baggage of style and respect. The academia and the industry feel it necessary, to focus on building communication skill right from the grass root level to make the coming generation equip themselves to cope up with the challenges they would probably be facing in the years to come. With the whole world coming under one global market, the concept of Lingua franca poses challenge.

As a part of colonisation, the British not only left their trace in the religion that they left behind, but also in the mode of communication. Originated as the language of trade, it stayed on to incarcerate millions of mind who were once their colony. This language of business and trade reverberated through the unfamiliar tongues of Americans, South Asians, Australians and many more. Thanks to its Darwinian capacity to evolve, adapt and flourish that it laid its imprint as a new medium of instruction. The process of nation building somehow attributes the concept of ‘world commodity’ to this language as it created a semblance of a global capitalistic community. The hegemony of English as an international language is attributed to the ‘structural power’ by Penny cook. He opines that the spread of English was connected with its economic and social origin.

The language has out grown its time and has received a newer dimension. English is now synonymous

with the abstract ideas like creating commonness among a group, trust building, prosperity in trade and above all the respect it bestows. Let's consider certain corporate advertisement to enunciate the idea. The advertisement for **Pakistan International Airport** '*Serving the World*' serves to provide a pleasant and optimistic picture about situations in Pakistan. Similarly, **Cobalt Mortgage Community** assures people around that during the process of mortgage they deserve personal care, when they are bereft of everything. Such sugary coated and verbose thoughts garbed in a language like English lure people to fall for it. English is now more than a brand; people worldwide speak it to be acceptable. The advantages of speaking English being economic utility, material advancement and feigned efficiency. To be more precise it stands for modernity. Having talked about the power packed Anglican discourse let me zero down to my major argument linguistic imperialism.

Robert Phillipson maintains that linguistic imperialism is the dominance, asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages. In the neo colonial scenario, English establishes a dominant stance on other native languages, marginalising them to the periphery. Phillipson views with suspicion the intention of the imperial powers, who introduced education to the colonies that too in a language unfamiliar to their tongue.

'Anachronistic views of **linguistic imperialism**, which see as important only the power asymmetry between the former colonial nations and the nations of the 'third world,' are hopelessly inadequate as an explanation of linguistic realities. They especially ignore the fact that 'first world' countries with strong languages seem to be under just as much pressure to adopt English, and that some of the harshest attacks on English have come from countries which have no such colonial legacy. When dominant languages feel they are being dominated, something much bigger than a simplistic conception of power relations must be involved." (David Crystal, *English as a Global Language*, 2nd ed. Cambridge University Press, 2003)

Phillipson goes on to explain the term Linguicism, which is discrimination based on language or dialect: linguistically argued racism. It's also known as *linguistic discrimination*. The term was coined in the 1980s by linguist Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, who defined *linguicism* as "ideologies and structures that are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources between groups which are defined on the basis of language." The corporate world representative of this western thought is a web, which entangles the youth by promising them an affluent career. The mushrooming of Spoken English centres promising proficiency in this alien language alludes to the fact that this language has greater significance in everyday life. The concept of native speaker, says Phillipson, is itself ambiguous as there cannot be a homogenous native language. Though the proposed homogeneity implies adherence to a commonly agreed upon language model and the eventual superiority of the core, diversity among native English speaking communities limits the possibility of such an achievement. Since no group has officially regionally or socially been proposed or accepted superior, there may be no criteria for adopting a single model. Besides, as Rampton (1990) insists nationality and ethnicity are not the same as language ability and language allegiance. Thus, the basic question of, *who should be taken as a representative model for non-native speaker?* Remains unanswered. Even if varieties as Elaborated code, Educated English, Standard English, Oxford English or RP can be accepted as the model, it indirectly forces a good number of native speakers to learn that variety. In addition to their linguistic differences, native speakers' cultural diversity also restricts the possibility of such a selection. The literature suggests that there exists no unique culture common to all native speakers and almost every country is multicultural.

Regardless of the fact that every country is multicultural, this insistence on adherence to the foreign language is seen as a strategy to colonise the mind of the third world countries. The Multi National Companies, who outsource employees from the third world countries, compel them to speak this alien tongue. In fact, as David Cooke remarks 'English is like the 'Trojan horse' left by the west to ensnare the orient'. This suggest that the language of power or rather discourse of power works up en masse suggesting colonialism and class interest threatening other regional language by promising a life of employment and opportunities. Severe harm to the ethnic culture and the mother tongue is the end result of this undue servility. The matter becomes worse when the non native speaker is put to trial in many of the MNC's for their lack of pronouncing English fluently. They are being crushed, bullied and broken after having faced all these insults. The fact that regional speech varieties instead of being revived are lumped together under certain labels like pidgin, perverted, disjointed and finally Broken English. There are sincere attempts made by the west to eradicate all these regional varieties to maintain their hegemony in the linguistic circle and somehow the corporate becomes harbingers to this process. Crystal explains about the dominance of English over other languages in simple terms by alluding to the history of Latin and Roman emperors,

Latin became an international language throughout the Roman Empire ...not because the Romans were more numerous than the peoples they subjugated. They were simply more powerful. ...when Roman military power declined, Latin remained for a millennium as the international language of education, thanks to a different sort of power-the ecclesiastical power of Roman Catholicism. There is the closest of links between language dominance and cultural power.... Without a strong power-base, whether political, military or economic, no language can make progress as an international medium of communication. Language has no independent existence, living in some sort of mystical space apart from the people who speak it. Language only exists in the brains and mouths and ears and hands and eyes of its users. When they succeed, on the international stage, their language succeeds. When they fail, their language fails.(1997,5).

CONCLUSIONS

No language should act as a signifier for sexism racism or imperialism because; language is only a mirror that represents structure behind it. A way out happens when the agencies which promulgate the hierarchy needs to incorporate pluralistic identities and hybrid discourses desired by other communities. The possibilities that Esperanto offers should not be disregarded, as a language which offers psychological advantages, equal possibilities to all its speakers and which is politically correct. The capacity for each individual, whatever their background, to express themselves through an International language is not to be underestimated. One shouldn't be spearheading the ideals of Franklin Roosevelt, who insisted that all the immigrants who enter America need to learn English within five years or leave the country instead let's take side with NgugiWaThiong'o who remarks "when there is real economic, political and cultural equality among nations and there is *democracy*, there will be no reason for any nation, nationality, or people to fear the emergence of a common language...English would make a credible candidate". Within this frame, let's try to decentre culture from the authority of an 'unreal native speaker' and in doing so realising the importance and need to appreciate linguistic and cultural diversity as well as tolerance and not linguistic and cultural homogeneity.

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